

Buffington Springs Resort Ke-O-Me-Zu Springs Buffington, Kentucky



THE STORY OF KE-O-ME-ZU SPRINGS

By Patricia A. Hahn

Buffington, Kentucky was described as an attractive town in the midst of rolling hills covered with highly productive fields. The Ke-o-me-zu springs were located in Buffington, KY. The Springs were later renamed Buffington Springs by the new owner, a West Virginia-born Methodist minister, Rev. George Nicholas Buffington. His family also was a partner in the Lovell & Buffington Tobacco Co. of Covington. He was born in 1851 and was married to Eloise they lived in Florence, Kentucky. Eloise was born in New Jersey. The Buffington connection to Erlanger was that Gorge Buffington was the president of the Citizens Bank of Erlanger. The Citizens Bank of Erlanger was organized by some of the leading citizens of Erlanger on December 16, 1911. A three story building on the Dixie Highway housed the Citizens Bank and Erlanger Post Office on the first floor, the Telephone Exchange on the second floor and the Masonic Order office and meeting room on the third floor. When George Buffington died in 1917, he was the president of the Citizens Bank of Erlanger.



Citizens Bank of Erlanger 1911 until 1927 when it merged with Erlanger Deposit Bank. In 1931 because of the depression the bank closed its doors forever. In 1942 the Library operated out of the Old Citizen's Bank Building. Then Andy Scheben purchased the building and opened Community Bank.

The Springs were mineral springs and became a popular medical vacation site in the late 1800's. Native Americans from Kentucky and Ohio were the first to use the Springs. They came centuries before Europeans arrived. The Indians attributed miraculous

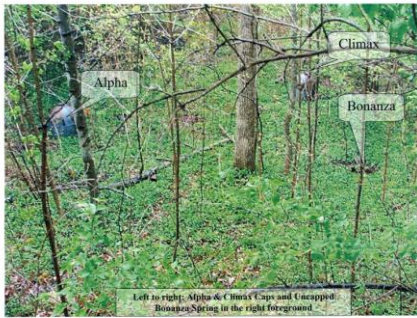
healing properties to the waters. From both sides of the Ohio River Indians came to hunt for food, to drink the water and seek the spirit of the fountain to cure their wounds and heal their sicknesses.

The early European settlers also promoted the medical benefits of these springs. C. F. Reid, a missionary to China named the springs “Ke-o-me-zu” meaning in Chinese “sparkling waters”. In 1891 Dr. Lamberth, a physician and surgeon at the Peking Hospital, visited the Springs and wrote “this water will scarcely be duplicated on this continent and perhaps by only one spring in Europe, in the cool shade of the trees they bubble-up potent factors for the good of humanity “. In 1912 Buffington, KY was described as 12 miles from Cincinnati and 326 miles from Chattanooga with a population of 400 and an altitude of 890 feet.



You can see the railroad tracks on the left Side of this map. The towns listed are Buffington, Sanfordsville, Erlanger, Crescent Springs and Ludlow on the Queen and Crescent Line.

In 1894 the Queen and Crescent Railroad advertisement read , within a 35 minute ride from Cincinnati in the midst of scenery whose great natural beauty has been heightened by skillful touches here and there, are three beautiful springs. Their medicinal values have been known for years-so far back that no man remembers when they first became known. Mr. Buffington advertised different healing benefits for each. Claims were made that the waters were effective against almost every ailment known to man. When one of the springs was being wellled-up for usage, it was noted that there were two other Springs. Now separate names for the healing trio were defined as Alpha, Climax and Bonanza. Interestingly, on November 18, 1890-Professor Karl Rangenback’s chemical analysis of the Spring Waters found that each of the three Springs were indeed different: his analysis found alumina and silica, along with carbonate, sulfate, nitrate salts of sodium, potassium, magnesium, calcium and iron, plus traces of organix materials and the effervescent carbonic acid. Alpha was prescribed as a cure for liver, kidney and bowel problems (Dyspepsia); while Bonanza was confirmed as a gentle laxative, an arouser of a torpid liver along with increasing ones appetite. In contrast, Climax enriched improvised blood and promoted digestion.

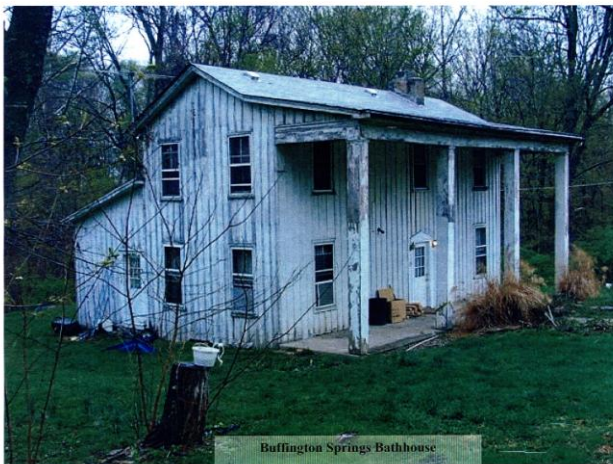


These are photos taken by John Scheben , Jr in 2007 on the site of Buffington Springs. In the early 1950's the three Springs were capped with zinc lids and the buildings were left to Nature's elements.



One of the last items remaining from the Springs is this carved wooden sign that originally hung at the entrance of the beautiful grounds of the resort. It was carved by Francis Roy Conner of Florence, KY. Francis was in charge of Maintenance at the resort. Francis walled-up the three Springs so that they were conveniently accessible and planted many of the trees that adorned the area.

The Buffington Springs were located beside the Queen and Crescent Railroad (Cincinnati Southern Railway) along what is today Garvey Avenue in Elsmere. There was a large hotel, several bath houses and various forms of recreation including a beautiful lake where fishing and boating were enjoyed. All of the spacious buildings were of the finest construction, large pillars in the front, spiral staircases leading to the second floor with the hotel room accommodations comparable to those found in major cities. In 1910, the hotel at the Springs was destroyed by fire, never to reopen.



Bathhouse from Buffington Springs Resort Era. 1894-1910

Photo taken by John Scheben ,Jr. in 2007. This is one of the last remaining structures from the Buffington Springs Resort Era. The property was sold to the Harrison Family and their family built homes and has lived on the property for many years.

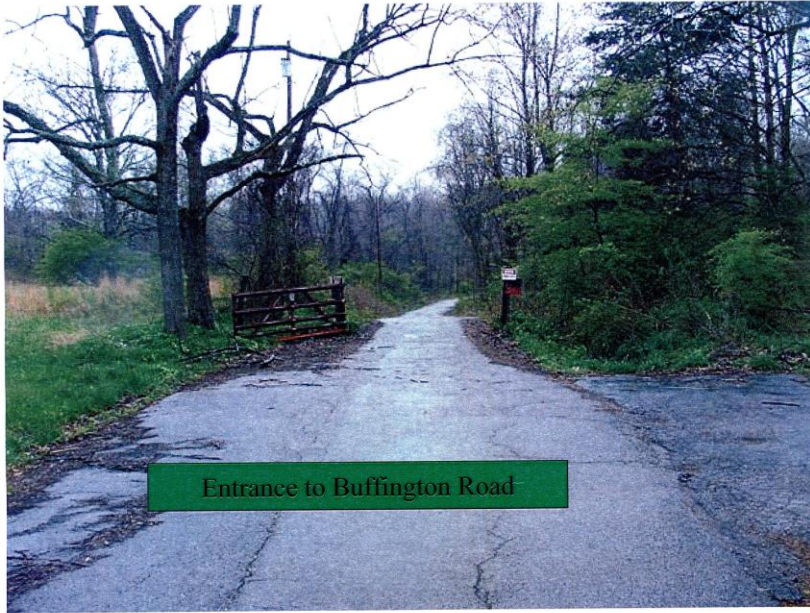


Photo taken by John Scheben , Jr. 2007 Entrance to present day Buffington Springs .

Resources:

Encyclopedia of N. KY: Dr. P. Tenkotte

KY Explorer, January 1996

Kenton County Public Library

Cincinnati Railroad Museum of History

Ancestry.com

From Buffalo Trails to the Twenty-First Century

A Centennial History of Erlanger, Kentucky

John A. Scheben , Sr. and John A. Scheben, Sr.